



# Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)

By Alberto Capatti, Massimo Montanari

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## Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History) By Alberto Capatti, Massimo Montanari

Italy, the country with a hundred cities and a thousand bell towers, is also the country with a hundred cuisines and a thousand recipes. Its great variety of culinary practices reflects a history long dominated by regionalism and political division, and has led to the common conception of Italian food as a mosaic of regional customs rather than a single tradition. Nonetheless, this magnificent new book demonstrates the development of a distinctive, unified culinary tradition throughout the Italian peninsula.

Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari uncover a network of culinary customs, food lore, and cooking practices, dating back as far as the Middle Ages, that are identifiably Italian:

- o Italians used forks 300 years before other Europeans, possibly because they were needed to handle pasta, which is slippery and dangerously hot.
- o Italians invented the practice of chilling drinks and may have invented ice cream.
- o Italian culinary practice influenced the rest of Europe to place more emphasis on vegetables and less on meat.
- o Salad was a distinctive aspect of the Italian meal as early as the sixteenth century.

The authors focus on culinary developments in the late medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque eras, aided by a wealth of cookbooks produced throughout the early modern period. They show how Italy's culinary identities emerged over the course of the centuries through an exchange of information and techniques among geographical regions and social classes. Though temporally, spatially, and socially diverse, these cuisines refer to a common experience that can be described as Italian. Thematically organized around key issues in culinary history and beautifully illustrated, *Italian Cuisine* is a rich history of the ingredients,

dishes, techniques, and social customs behind the Italian food we know and love today.

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## **Editorial Review**

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The latest volume in the Art and Traditions of the Table series focuses on the cultural history of Italian cooking. With an authoritative command of the subject, Capatti and Montanari trace the changing vocabulary of Italy's earliest cookbooks from classical Latin to vernacular Italian, showing how this shift reflected the increasing significance of passing culinary skill from one generation to the next. Bit by bit, Italian cookbook writers also eliminated Gallicisms from their vocabulary to express the uniqueness of Italian cooking. Pleasures of the table then, as today, related to images of health and well being, the north favoring voluptuous fatness, the south tending to ascetic thinness. The authors limn the decline of the servant class and the gradual shift to femininity in the Italian kitchen. Contrary to contemporary emphases on Italian cookery as an agglomeration of microcuisines, Capatti and Montanari stress its unity across the nation. This relentlessly academic work has an impressive bibliography of historic Italian sources. *Mark Knoblauch*  
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Review

An exhaustive and detailed investigation and will prove to be a valuable textbook for many foodies.

*(Economist)*

A scholarly, discursive exploration of techniques, taste, service and technology.

*(Times Literary Supplement)*

With an authoritative command of the subject, Capatti and Montanari trace the changing vocabulary of Italy's earliest cookbooks from classical Latin to vernacular Italian, showing how this shift reflected the increasing significance of passing culinary skill from one generation to the next... This relentlessly academic work has an impressive bibliography of historic Italian sources.

*(Mark Knoblauch Booklist)*

Adds a world of history to our understanding, making the case for the existence of a true Italian culinary tradition in spite of the regionality of product.... It is an engrossing, richly documented text.

*(Bell'Italia Magazine)*

*Italian Cuisine* is not simply another history.

*(Priscilla Ferguson Journal of Modern History)*

A must-buy if you love Italian cuisine.

(Antonio Carluccio *The Daily Express*)

## Review

Alberto Cappatti and Massimo Montanari deserve a feast. They have thoroughly researched and described the cultural context of Italian food throughout history. Why are prosciutto and melon paired? What did people eat in the middle ages? Who invented sorbet? A fine tour of the history of the peninsula with a fork in hand. This book will live on my desk right beside the Italian dictionary.

(Frances Mayes, author of *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Bella Tuscany*)

This book is an amazing resource for anyone interested in how the world ended up loving pasta, mozzarella and osso buco—and the cultural story Italian food tells. All you have to do is dip in and out of a few chapters and you'll feel like you've graduated from a culinary history class lead by the masters, from Apicius to Platina to Artusi.

(Cesare Casella, author of *Diary of a Tuscan Chef*)

*Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History* is the book I have been waiting for. It gives the history of the Italian eating tradition, exploring ingredients and recipes of the Italians within an economic and topographical context. This is a great book with layers of information, research and examples of what constitutes the Italian culinary tradition.

(Lidia Matticchio Bastianich, cookbook author, public television host, and restaurateur)

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#### Valerie Israel:

This book untitled *Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)* to be one of several books that best seller in this year, that's because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit into it. You will easily to buy this particular book in the book retail outlet or you can order it via online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, since you can read this book in your Mobile phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this guide from your list.

**James Fletcher:**

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